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ABSTRACT

A teacher's role is to make the child totally aware of his world. Creative arts and crafts should lead the normal or handicapped child to increased awareness of and sensitivity to the world around him. Such basic concepts as shape, color, texture, symmetry, designs and patterns, movements, and distance perception can be developed through arts and crafts. By giving the child art experiences in the out-of-doors, these concepts can be taught by infinite methods. These experiences should also develop awareness, challenge, stimulation, individual expression, enjoyment, and appreciation. An out-of-doors program can be modified to fit any setting. Suggested arts and crafts are listed in this paper to guide the teacher in developing programs suitable for their local environment. (NQ)

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ARTS AND CRAFTS FOR OUTDOORS

Arts and Crafts is a creative activity found in the school curriculum which should lead the normal or handicapped child to increased awareness of and sensitivity to the world around him. The role of the teacher is to make the child totally aware of his world. Through arts and crafts a child develops the basic concepts of shape, color, texture, symmetry, designs and patterns, movements and distance perception.

A successful Arts and Crafts program conducted in the out-of-doors requires neither great talent nor vast quantities of materials. However, it does require willingness and enthusiasm for learning with the students. It also requires a willingness to experiment and the courage to answer a question with "I don't know, but let's find out." This type of program works because it can be modified to fit any setting. It is stimulating because both students and teacher have the opportunity to develop new ideas through increasing awareness of the world around them, thus fostering personal growth in many new and exciting directions and concepts.

By placing the art experiences in the out-of-doors the methods used for developing these concepts increase infinitely. In addition, the child is surrounded by hundreds of stimuli which he can learn to discover and appreciate in new and different ways. Furthermore, the use of the out-of-doors may serve as positive reinforcement to any or all of the concepts already learned in the classroom. The disturbed child also gains a great deal on a personal level from this type of experience, simply because his project is totally his from start to finish. An indigenous program gives the student a chance to create from what he finds in his environment, rather than waiting for an environment to be placed in his hands. Most schools, whether urban or rural possess some of the basic things necessary for an indigenous program.

Creativity in any situation is not something which can be specifically taught, especially emotionally handicapped youngsters. Their needs are different, and the teacher must relate to and understand these needs, so that their creativity will be allowed to surface and be expressed. This involves a child who can be made to feel free from personal and social inhibitions - and also an exciting atmosphere where he can be stimulated towards discovery. This type of creative learning should let the student explore his own potential with confidence and originality while developing a unique sensitive approach to everything around him.

Creativity generates feeling and excitement which comes from total awareness and involvement. Inspiration can come from any intrinsic material whether it be a rock, tree, flower, broken bottles, tossed cans, street signs, or even a brick building or a city street. This out-of-doors environment naturally frees the imagination and the emotions, the first and most important step before one goes on to express the excitement and wonder he feels.

Activities should be centered around natural settings, their goal to help the child sense, wonder, understand and desire to sense some type of beauty using nature as an inspiration. Art is nature; Nature is art. Our opportunities should be concerned with encouragement, awareness, challenge, stimulation, individual expression, enjoyment and appreciation.

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The limitations for art in the out-of-doors include the age of the child, his maturity, his motor control, and his environmental experiences. Various projects can be used to meet the needs of emotionally handicapped children and their varied abilities. If the teacher displays an enthusiastic attitude the children will make great efforts to do the best they can. The teacher should find himself in a helping relationship to the student, instructing specific skills as they are needed. This not only facilitates the learning process but fosters a respect for ability between teacher and student while developing cohesiveness in the class.

Art in nature could be just picking up a small piece of wood, feeling it, looking at it closely, and imagining about the different forms it has, or lines it could have, or even shapes within it. The child is a wonderful resource of creative energy and we must help that child use his potential to its fullest degree by providing opportunities, materials, and natural equipment which in turn bring about circumstances and develops ideas. The end product is not of great importance. It is the experience and satisfaction gained from the experience which yields a happier, and more thoughtful child.

The following list of suggested arts and crafts activities is provided for the teachers' guidance in developing programs suitable for their local environment.

ACTIVITIES:

Yarn stringing in nature (shapes and patterns).

Use of foil to rub and feel textures and patterns (brick, stucco, wood, grills).

Listening to the wind rustling through the trees - and painting the feeling you have.

Decoupage of wood and bak.

Spotting shapes in building stones.

Building fine stick houses and streets from observations and imagination.

Use of fallen birch bark for paper.

Use of driftwood for decorating.

Textural rubbings of fire escapes, old buildings.

Collage - collecting things from an environment and arranging it on cardboard or between clear plastic contact paper.

Take a walk and feel textures and listen to sounds. Come back and illustrate feelings and thoughts.

ACTIVITIES, Continued

Collect sand, dirt, and mud. Use mud to paint with. Draw pictures in the sand and dirt.

Find all the shades of colors in the buildings and houses.

Notice silhouettes of clouds and tall buildings.

Design reflections of the sun from windows.

Examine shapes and textures in roads and other things built by man.

Study shapes, color and texture of sidewalks, asphalt, gravel.

Distance perception of telephone poles, basketball, hoops, flag poles.

Sand art - soak in vegetable dye - Remove sand from solution and let dry before using. Draw desired design on wood or heavy cardboard. Divide areas with string saturated with glue. Let dry. Spread glue freely in stringed areas. Pour colored sand. Press sand into glue and let dry.

Leaf scapes - use many different leaves - Place on construction paper in design pattern. Hold leaves in place with pins. Lightly spray with various colors or rub with crayons.

Colors - discovering different colors on the same tree? Painting outside. How many different shades of green can one find outside? Discover colors in clay.

Mud painting on rocks.

Collages - leaves, pebbles, seeds, bottle caps - Burlap provides a good background for some.

Closing eyes and touching stones, bark, buildings, to be more aware of texture.

Lettering of discarded cans, street signs.

Traffic light mobiles.

Take the children into a field and have them take their shoes off. Can you see the world through your feet?

Have children draw sea shells as they are. Then turn them into creatures and place them into an environment.

What would the world look like if you were a traffic light, a tree, a rock, a hawk or even a tiny ant?

Study knot holes in a piece of wood or lines on a sidewalk. From these, abstract designs can be found or imaginary creatures.

Rubbings - (Crayon) of bricks, tree trunks, gravestones, rocks, metal grills, screens.

ACTIVITIES, continued

Make creatures out of stones, twings, nuts and pine cones.

Make costume jewelry out of bottle caps, shells, cardboard, nuts.

Mosaics out of crushed bark, seed, pine cones, cracked dyed egg shells, pebbles.

Tree weaving - using flexible branches, string and various long grasses (cattails) for the weaving.

Relief pictures

Roller printing from various forms of rollers found (cans, hair curlers, etc.) Put yarn around roller - Dip in paint - Print.

Mobiles - from tree branches - colored construction paper, scissors, paste and string of thread.

Clay pots - many areas in the north country have clay deposits which yield clay clean enough to be used in its natural state, without washing. Make the pot, which the children may decorate by pressing hemlock branches into the partially dry pot or incising the pot with a sharp stick to form a design.

Rock creatures or paper weights.

Gadget printing - assorted household objects, bottle caps, screws, plugs, sticks, pine cones.

Texture prints - cut up and arrange and glue materials on cardboard. Roll paint onto your texture design and lay a paper over it and rub with hand.

Clay mold - use clay to make mold out of bark - dip into kink or paint - make various designs or prints on construction paper.

Bark Collage - use clay on bark - stick other materials into clay (pipe cleaners, leaves, moss, branches).

Collage with Gesso-primer white. Place various materials on cardboard, i.e. string, rope, buttons, etc. Put on 2-3 coats of gesso.

Antiqued bottle or can - cover with glue - place pieces of clay to create sculpture effect. Cover with crushed aluminum foil to show shape of bottle with clay. Paint with black tempra. Cover with polymer.

Tissue Paper bottles - Glue bottle with paper toweling strips - Various cut tissue paper is applied next dipped into liquid starch. Apply two coats of shellac when dry.